

Madam Speaker, I rise today to commend and congratulate Harris Farms upon being honored with the 2008 Baker, Peterson and Franklin Ag Business Award. I invite my colleagues to join me in wishing Harris Farms many years of continued success.

A TRIBUTE TO KEN BURNS

HON. EDOLPHUS TOWNS

OF NEW YORK

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 19, 2008

Mr. TOWNS. Madam Speaker, I rise today to pay tribute and to honor Mr. Ken Burns, one of the most celebrated documentary producers of our day. His films have captured the American experience and have forever elevated and enriched our understanding of American history.

Ken Burns, born in Brooklyn, earned his Bachelor of Arts degree from Hampshire College in Amherst, Massachusetts in 1975, and went on to become one of the co-founders of Florentine Films. His first Academy Award-winning documentary was *Brooklyn Bridge*, in 1981. Since then, he has produced nineteen more documentaries, two earning Academy Award nominations and seven winning Emmy Awards.

Ken Burns was the director, producer, co-writer, chief cinematographer, music director and executive producer of the landmark television series *The Civil War*, considered by many to be his magnum opus. This film was the highest rated series in the history of American Public Television and attracted an audience of 40 million during its premiere in September 1990. The series has been honored with more than forty major film and television awards, including two Emmy Awards, two Grammy Awards, the Producer of the Year Award from the Producer's Guild, the People's Choice Award, the Peabody Award, the DuPont-Columbia Award, the D.W. Griffiths Award, and the \$50,000 Lincoln Prize, among dozens of others.

Ken Burns most recent documentary, *The War*, tells the story of the Second World War from the personal perspectives of men and women from Waterbury, CT, Mobile, AL, Sacramento, CA, and Luverne, MN. Airing in the fall of 2007, it was the most watched series in the last ten years on PBS. One hundred and seventeen PBS stations across the nation participated in some form of community outreach and nearly 30,000 educator guides went to every high school in the country. As was hoped, "The War" started a massive national dialog about this most cataclysmic event in the history of the United States.

Madam Speaker, I would like to recognize Mr. Ken Burns for igniting a passion for American history in millions of Americans throughout his prodigious filmmaking career.

Madam Speaker, I urge my colleagues to join me in paying tribute to Mr. Ken Burns.

WHEN WILL BAILOUTS STOP

HON. VIRGINIA FOXX

OF NORTH CAROLINA

IN THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

Wednesday, November 19, 2008

Ms. FOXX. Madam Speaker, last December, I joined 99 of my House colleagues in op-

posing H.R. 6, the Energy Independence and Security Act of 2008 which authorized a \$25 billion bailout for the automobile industry. Nine months later, I voted against H.R. 2638 which designated \$7.5 billion in emergency funding for the bailout. Now Detroit is asking for an additional \$25 billion as Democrat leaders line up to deem this industry "too big to fail." When will it stop? What means of production are next in line for seizure by our centralized government?

Detroit automakers' management and labor unions have created a toxic combination of poor decision-making that has led to this mess. I understand that prepaid pensions decreased by \$16.6 billion or 82.1 percent to \$3.6 billion on September 30, 2008 from \$20.2 billion on December 31, 2007 and by \$15.3 billion or 80.9 percent from \$18.9 billion on September 30, 2007. These decreases are due to: (1) losses of \$6.3 billion on the hourly and salaried pension plan asset portfolio; (2) recording a \$2.7 billion liability related to the Settlement Agreement; (3) recording a \$2.7 billion liability due to the increase in the monthly pension benefit paid to salaried OPEB plan participants as compensation for the elimination of post-65 healthcare benefits; (4) the transfer of \$2.1 billion of Delphi pension liabilities to GM; and (5) recording a \$2.0 billion increase due to the 2008 UAW and IUE-CWA Special Attrition programs. There are some who believe that this means that after combining General Motor's cash losses, and with the losses disclosed in GM's most recently filed SEC 10Q form, it totals about \$23 billion. Therefore a \$25 billion bailout is little more than a three month band-aid.

The accompanying Wall Street Journal editorial outlines the perils of pursuing this latest bailout. It is my hope that Congressional leaders will reject this latest misguided effort to bailout industries that have made poor decisions at the expense of those who have not.

NOVEMBER 10, 2008.

NATIONALIZING DETROIT

In the Washington mind, there are two kinds of private companies. There are successful if "greedy" corporations, which can always afford to pay more taxes and tolerate more regulation. And then there are the corporate supplicants that need a handout. As the Detroit auto makers are proving, you can go from being the first to the second in the blink of an election.

For decades, Congress has never had a second thought as it imposed tighter emissions standards on GM, Ford and Chrysler, denouncing them for making evil SUVs. Yet now that the companies are bleeding cash, and may be heading for bankruptcy, suddenly the shrinking Big Three are the latest candidates for a taxpayer bailout. One \$25 billion loan facility has already been signed into law, and Senator Debbie Stabenow (D., Mich.) wants another \$25 billion, this time with no strings attached.

Speaker Nancy Pelosi and Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid met last week with company and union officials, and they later sent a letter urging Treasury Secretary Henry Paulson to bestow cash from the Troubled Asset Relief Program (Tarp) on the companies. Barack Obama implied at his Friday press conference that he too favors some kind of taxpayer rescue of Detroit, though no doubt he'd like to have President Bush's signature on the check so he won't have to take full political responsibility.

We hope Messrs. Bush and Paulson just say no. The Tarp was intended to save the financial system from collapse, not to be a honey

pot for any industry running short of cash. The financial panic has hit Detroit hard, but its problems go back decades and are far deeper than reduced access to credit among car buyers. As a political matter, the Bush Administration is also long past the point where it might get any credit for helping Detroit. But it will earn the scorn of taxpayers if it refuses to set some limits on access to the Tarp. If Democrats want to change the rules next year, let them do it on their own political dime.

A bailout might avoid any near-term bankruptcy filing, but it won't address Detroit's fundamental problems of making cars that Americans won't buy and labor contracts that are too rich and inflexible to make them competitive. As Paul Ingrassia notes nearby, Detroit's costs are far too high for their market share. While GM has spent billions of dollars on labor buyouts in recent years, they are still forced by federal mileage standards to churn out small cars that make little or no profit at plants organized by the United Auto Workers.

Rest assured that the politicians don't want to do a thing about those labor contracts or mileage standards. In their letter, Ms. Pelosi and Mr. Reid recommend such "taxpayer protections" as "limits on executive compensation and equity stakes" that would dilute shareholders. But they never mention the UAW contracts that have done so much to put Detroit on the road to ruin. In fact, the main point of any taxpayer rescue seems to be to postpone a day of reckoning on those contracts. That includes even the notorious UAW Jobs Bank that continues to pay workers not to work.

A Detroit bailout would also be unfair to other companies that make cars in the U.S. Yes, those are "foreign" companies in the narrow sense that they are headquartered overseas. But then so was Chrysler before Daimler sold most of the car maker to Cerberus, the private equity fund. Honda, Toyota and the rest employ about 113,000 American auto workers who make nearly four million cars a year in states like Alabama and Tennessee. Unlike Michigan, these states didn't vote for Mr. Obama.

But the very success of this U.S. auto industry indicates that highly skilled American workers can profitably churn out cars without being organized by the UAW. A bailout for Chrysler would in essence be assisting rich Cerberus investors at the expense of middle-class nonunion auto workers. Is this the new "progressive" era we keep reading so much about?

The car makers say that bankruptcy is unthinkable and "not an option." And bankruptcy would certainly be expensive, not least for Washington itself, which could be responsible for 600,000 or so retiree pensions through the Pension Benefit Guaranty Corp. In that sense, the bailout is intended to rescue the politicians from having to honor that earlier irresponsible guarantee. But at least that guarantee would be finite. If Uncle Sam buys into Detroit, \$50 billion would only be the start of the outlays as taxpayers were obliged to protect their earlier investment in uncompetitive companies.

If our politicians can't avoid throwing taxpayer cash at Detroit, then they should at least do so in a way that really protects taxpayers. That means handing a receiver the power to replace current management, zero out current shareholders, and especially to rewrite labor and other contracts. Anything less is merely a payoff to Michigan politicians and their union allies.